Note to the Secretary-General
(Through the Deputy Secretary-General)

UPDATE ON THE WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT

1. In support of the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016, a Global Consultation was held in Geneva from 14 to 16 October 2015. This was the culmination of the inclusive, 18-month multi-stakeholder process that engaged more than 23,000 people in over 151 countries. The Switzerland hosted the event and co-chaired it with OCHA. The Deputy Secretary-General delivered a keynote speech on your behalf. Approximately 1,200 participants from 153 countries attended the event, representing a wide range of stakeholders, including Member States and the UN system.

2. The meeting provided an opportunity for different stakeholders to discuss and refine the proposals outlined in the Synthesis Report and capture additional ideas. The findings of the report were validated, while also identifying some gaps and further opportunities. The five action areas of the Report - dignity, safety, resilience, partnerships and finance - were supported, and there was recognition that they are interdependent. The executive summary of the Synthesis Report is enclosed.

3. Participants reaffirmed the values and aspirations of the UN Charter as well as the fundamental tenets of international humanitarian law. There was also a resounding call for change to support the most vulnerable people; for the global community to deliver on its pledge to leave no one behind and to reach those furthest behind first; and for all stakeholders to commit to address humanitarian needs and prevent and resolve crises. The Summit therefore presents a historic opportunity to provide hope for people of a life of safety, dignity and resilience, and to reaffirm the centrality of humanity in global decision-making. It will also serve as a platform for all stakeholders to announce concrete initiatives and share innovations for improved humanitarian action.

4. The deliberations in Geneva and the outcomes of the inclusive multi-stakeholder consultations will now inform your report which will convey your vision for the Summit and set the tone and ambition for a global agenda for humanity. The report, which will be issued in early 2016, will also lay out the actions and commitments needed to realize this vision. Addressing humanitarian needs requires a more effective and efficient way of working by all actors to build a more global, inclusive, accountable and robust humanitarian system. While the Summit will be a multiplier of global processes in 2015, including on the new sustainable development framework, Agenda 2030, it must lead to change by all stakeholders, including Governments and the United Nations system.

5. Between now and the Summit, there is a need to develop further specific initiatives and recommendations stemming from the consultation process, which will become part of a new ‘humanitarian toolbox’ for the future. All stakeholders will also continue to be engaged and informed on the development of your report, particularly Member States. In addition, all stakeholders must mobilize the political will at the Summit to deliver the change needed to enable affected people, communities, humanitarian and development organizations, countries
and other stakeholders to better prepare for and respond to crises and be more resilient to shocks. Preparations for the Summit are already under way. I am sparing no efforts to ensure continued engagement with all stakeholders and am engaging with Turkey as the host.

6. While the majority of stakeholders were extensively engaged in the consultation process, some Member States continued their push for clarity on the process and outcome of the Summit, including an intergovernmental process leading to an outcome document.

7. Your support at the G20 meeting to rally leaders around the commitment for humanity and to attend the Summit at the highest level possible is important. Through your leadership and political will at the highest levels, we must forge a clear perspective for the next generation on how to address and end, collectively, the suffering of millions of people affected by conflict and natural disasters, including the effects of climate change, chronic inequality and poverty, both now and in the future.

Stephen O’Brien
2 November 2015

cc: Mr. Eliasson
    Ms. Malcorra
    Mr. Feltman